

Maine *Learning Results* Review Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday, May 5, 2005

9:00 – 3:00 PM

Cross Building, Room 105

Meeting goals: There are four primary goals for this meeting: (1) Provide a general update and share information about Instructional Context Group (2) Finalize details regarding Technology Standards: How will they be configured? Who will do the work? What directives will be given? (3) Provide input for Summer work sessions with Content Area Panelists (4) Provide input regarding next steps in process.

Anita opened the meeting.

Patrick gave the members an update on Ch 127 and other DOE issues.

There is some emerging clarity regarding changes to the system of *Learning Results*:

Patrick thanked Karoldene for coming in to talk to the education Committee. Her testimony in that setting was critical in informing the education committee.

Yesterday the Education Committee discussed LD 1424 "An act to simplify Maine's Learning Results".

In this revised bill, there are a number of elements that were put forth by the commissioner:

- 1) The midcourse adjustments should not be interpreted as a change in the long term vision for the means to improve all Maine schools.
- 2) Any flexibility in the ability to implement rules and requirements will be accompanied by an increased role of the Department of Education in oversight and monitoring.
- 3) There will be a broadening of the role of the Department as the implementation of the LAS continues.
- 4) The phasing in of the graduation requirements should not be interpreted as a pass on the implementation of the other content areas.

The notion of broadening the basis for the department for be involved with schools around the state.

The Department will review the comprehensive education plans for all schools and will be able to become involved with those schools when the review of the CEP warrants it.

The Learning results endorsement will be added to the diploma for those students who meet the requirements. The goal is to move to a virtual 100 percent of students for the awarding of the LR diploma.

We are assuming that many districts will go ahead with the existing timeline. A survey has gone out to all schools, and asks them the extent to which these schools will be able to meet the current timeline. This will assist in determining the status of implementation, and the comfort level.

There is additional language that will permit alternate tests to be used at the secondary level. Other language allows for the state to change the nature and scope of the testing at these grades.

The current GLE's will be expanded to better encompass the core skills that students need to learn.

Mary noted Social Studies has been taken off the screen in the past few years, and feels that unless there is an emphasis through testing, content areas tend to lose some of their importance in school curriculum.

Betty noted these changes make a great deal of sense. She noted there is little understanding in schools about assessment for learning and assessment of learning. Currently there is not enough offered at the university level to support people in the field.

Patrick noted that in order for the LAS to really make sense for people we have to build that capacity underneath people.

Ellie noted that we must be smart enough to give schools the opportunity to be flexible in their approach to educating students in the Social Studies. Likewise she noted it was very important to have people in our society that understand other cultures.

Deborah wondered how the changes in the Assessment system would impact Alternate Assessment. There is no final decision for this process.

Bonnie noted it was critical for people to understand the differences between assessment for and OF learning.

Dan wondered about the differences between school level and student level data. School level data would be used to inform teaching and learning. We can use this in public reporting. Generally the data is not adequate to make determinations about individual students but can provide a rich picture about the performance of the school.

Ellie congratulated Patrick and the Commissioner for their work with the Education Committee.

One of Patrick's greatest worries is the weakening of standards, and wants us to ensure we continue to strive for the highest aspirations in our standards and our schools.

Anita began the next portion of the meeting.

Anita brought the question of a separate content area for Technology to the Commissioner.

Our goal for today is to

- 1) update the group
- 2) finalize the conversations about Technology
- 3) continue the discussion about the summer work sessions

Since we last met, Anita has met with all of the 8 content area groups and have determined membership for all of those groups. For the most part they were able to fill these with the list they had in place.

For each of the grade span teacher seats on the panels, they also had an alternate in place for each of the members. These positions will not be shared. The alternate will be there in case of an emergency and will receive the minutes.

In some cases there were not enough people to choose from to fill the specific slots on each of the committees. In these few instances there was further outreach to the field.

Anita is also waiting to hear from the external agencies to make their final recommendations to the Department for nominations.

For ELA, Math and PE they made sure they included Pre-K teachers.

We failed last time to make sure there was representation of Special Education and Library Media Specialists. Most of these Library people were happy to be included in another content area.

Bette noted that it was critical for each of these content areas to have a library media specialist because informational literacy is so critical. Anita will go back to the field to solicit more nominees in this area.

John wondered about including people who were not a part of the educational community?

Brian noted the inclusion of specialists from industry and other areas that are information specialists may not have a broad enough base of experience to comment on the education of all students.

Anita reminded the group there will be approximately 15 on each panel.

Anita recently met with the Mid Coast Curriculum Coordinators:

The group agreed that a review of the standards is important and hope that we make the system more manageable. They also agreed that even if we do the very best job we can in defining the core ideas for each content area, if that is all we do, that is not going to make changes in the schools.

They raised the point of reflecting on assessments as we define the standards. They reminded the DOE that in effective classrooms we select the learning goals and plan the assessment together before we begin the implementation. They cautioned that conversations about assessment has to happen at the same time that we are considering the standards.

Anita noted meetings with Literacy specialist may indicate that research in particular content areas can guide us in the focus of assessment for that content area. There may be places where we have to confirm that particular skills are in place before the students can go on to learn the next concept.

Brian cautioned that having specific requirements in place to “pass” certain skills can lead to many unintended consequences.

Bette noted this was the crux of the issue regarding assessment for learning and assessment “OF” learning.

Bonnie noted there are some cognitive windows that close over time, the timing of instruction is important.

Anita added this could be part of the value added to the revised learning results. The LR could help guide teachers in how they assess for learning and how they assess for performance. Anita suggested these issues should be included in the proposal for the June 9th meeting.

Francis emphasized the point made by Brian. We must ensure that we do not limit the performance and opportunities for students by placing arbitrary checkpoints for students and schools.

A regular meeting schedule has been established with the SARS team at the department (Standards Assessment Regional Services Team) All of the regional services, alternate assessment, LAS, special education are represented on that team.

The SARS team reviewed the Guiding Values and made just a few comments including dropping the word “cluster” and replacing it with “grade span”

Anita shared a powerpoint summary of the beginning the conversations regarding the instructional context group. This was also shared with the SARS team.

Some of the major components:

- 1) Significant Meaningful Content
- 2) Engaging instruction community connections
- 3) Instructional Models and teacher understanding.

They talked about the “palette” of learning contexts. These range from teacher as expert to students and teachers as co-learners, the concept of local and community contexts, the classroom context (the materials and environment of the classroom) and another is project based learning.

The group discussed the success of organizations like NASA:

The group examined the role of teachers as a member of the classroom community

Many characteristics of successful teachers were discussed: including knowledge of metacognition. Learning can be an entrepreneurial enterprise.

Some of the primary resources were the Lucas foundations, the Buck foundation and “How People Learn” from the NRC.

Some the short term steps are:

Summarize the information mentioned in the meeting.

Longer terms steps for this group are:

- 1) to provide examples of project based learning and student work that illustrate the palette of learning contexts
- 2) to provide examples of student work that extent the description of the palette of context by providing examples of specific performance indicators for each content area.

Ellie wondered at what point is the determination of where the information will go? Where will all of the information be placed? Anita suggested this will be one of the functions of the LRRAC.

Anita suggested we start a list of the parking lot issues and items that need to be addressed in the scope of the work we have to do, but may not be the focus of any particular meeting.

John wondered if project based learning is content as well as context?

John noted that not all skills are equally important – nor all knowledge. Generalizable skills like problem solving and learning to learn – how do we extract these and put them into the document.

Bonnie suggested there is a “Blue Book” of the essential skills that provides the national focus for Adult Education. She suggested we contact Donna Curry for a list of these.

These skills include: 16 in all. All of these are measurable, and are documented in the book: **Equipped for the Future Content Standards available at:**

http://eff.cls.utk.edu/PDF/standards_guide.pdf

Nancy wondered if these concepts are taught in the university preparation programs for teachers at our colleges and universities around the State? What questions are we asking ourselves and what are we using with the future teachers in the state.

Janice noted that this information cannot be included in any document; it has to be put into place in training.

Karoldene noted the format of the document has got to stay simple – we need to clarify the standards, but keep them accessible and usable.

Bette suggested this has got to be web based and we need to be able to build an educator community online that gets information directly to teachers.

Anita suggested that whatever we choose to put into this document will become part of the public conversation about the learning.

Nancy recalled the roundtable discussions that happened in the first iteration of the Learning Results. This gave the teachers the chance to internalize the standards and if not embrace them, be able to work with them effectively.

Janice suggested we have to have professional development that is equal to any changes in the systems.

Bonnie suggested it was effective in her work with teachers to help them see the ways these approaches will change their job, their quality of life, and their effectiveness for students.

Bonnie further noted Adult Education (Equipped for the Future) found the process was the product, and it was effective and exciting. Adult Education is a field that is underpaid and has no benefits but these teachers are excited.

Deborah suggested teachers having access to technology and technology based learning around these issues is critical to build more capacity.

Bette suggested that regional meeting about the Review be coordinated in such a way that any message is consistent around the state.

Dan offered there is a disconnect between the high school faculty and the post secondary people to help ensure there is a more seamless system between the K-12 systems and all of the post-secondary options.

Francis suggested there is a real need to create more coherence in the system of professional development. Right now there are many different kinds of information and trainings available.

Anita suggested we shift the group's discussion:

Technology:

Anita brought the question of a separate content area for technology to the commissioner. Nationally there are a number of different approaches.

Anita share that the commissioner wants to keep Technology together with Science and emphasized it is critical to focus on technology and gain clarity about what technology means and what is important for kids to know and be able to do.

Other points:

- 1) In the interest of simplicity it is not wise to create another content area.
- 2) By keeping technology in the same discipline with science it may be more likely to be assessed and therefore, taught.
- 3) There may be technology standards that should be applied in all content areas.

The Advisory Committee needs to determine: a) What is the direction for the work around Technology? B) Should Maine focus on technology or engineering.

The group read the Wicklein article. A related article by the same author can be found at:

[http://succeednow.org/icee/Papers/218_ICEE2004VarnadoPendleton_\(1\).pdf](http://succeednow.org/icee/Papers/218_ICEE2004VarnadoPendleton_(1).pdf)

Following Lunch Anita asked the group to comment on the essential skills and knowledge for all students that are related to technology and/or engineering.

We are not preparing people for an engineering career, we are training people to think like engineers and plan for life in that way.

Mathematical modeling is an important component – and putting engineering into math makes nearly as much sense as putting it into the science area. Often, using the science and engineering outcomes for math are the most effective ways to teach complex math concepts.

Karoldene suggested that we need to be careful not to raise the bar for the learning results even higher than they already are.

Dan mentioned the issue of hands on experiences that kids need to explore the concepts of math and science and engineering.

Bonnie suggested the initial article was too limited in the scope of the curriculum needed to teach this subject.

Only about 25% of the CTE teachers in the state are actually trained in technology education. John shared a graphic and suggested that engineering is not a content area, it is an approach to problem solving

There are a whole bunch of students in schools who do not learn in traditional classroom settings. How are we going to serve these students?

Bette noted she agreed with John, there were kids in her school who were able to do all kinds of things that should be happening because of programming that focused on technology education. She was charged with the task of getting rid of the program – she had to go to the mat to save it, and now she is finding ways to sell this program to her community.

Bette noted that there is an instructional component that has been given over to the technology person in the school district who then controls the use and access to instructional technology without an understanding of technology education and the skills and knowledge. Some states have become so narrow in their understanding of technology that they allow students to "test out" by demonstration of keyboarding skills.

John suggested this is a very crucial discussion and while we don't want everyone to be an engineer we do want all of our students to be great problem solvers, to use mathematics and a systematic approach to assist them.

Anita suggested that some of technology is about process, but some of it also about substantive content as well.

Engineering is all about using tools, materials and processes to bring things alive. It is one thing to design things on the computer it is another thing to develop something and build it and test it. We would like to see many programs around the state to help students to build projects to solve a problem. The real key to the technology aspect is the utilization of materials tools and design.

John noted that we look at our goals and there are a series of 6 or seven things we have said: Lifelong learner, problem-solver, Etc. In science and math the approach to content is project based – and in these content areas, the process is much more important than any of the content. In order to solve these problems you have to be able to work with other people, to solve problems and to be able to bring the project to fruition in order to be successful. These are the same skills you need to have in real life.

Janice wondered if the issue is that students don't know they are doing science and engineering? Are people doing this and not even realizing it? No one has put technology together with the content that allows people to understand at a basic level how technology fits together with the content.

Bonnie suggested that the teacher is using the concepts of engineering to design a class lesson that will be the most effective.

Ellie offered two thoughts: If we can't split technology out to sprinkle the other content areas, we could at least reference technology in the other content areas,

In addition, could there be more emphasis on hands on assessment -- performance assessment --

Bette suggested this was about taking what we know is successful and important and making sure that we are putting these concepts into the other content areas. She further noted that Massachusetts has done a remarkable job of integrating technology and engineering into all of the standards --

Anita is going to send out the link to the Massachusetts website.

The link to the file can be found at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/scitech/2001/0501.pdf>

In addition the group discussed the role of ethics in science technology and other areas.

Tom suggested as we look at the content area panels, who is on those panels will determine the extent to which technology will be represented.

Anita suggested that we cannot presume that people will come in with the perspective on technology that we want them to have unless we provide professional development to the content area panels.

John suggested we use the term "Engineering Technology" might be a better way to phrase it.

Val suggested we use the broadest possible term.

Anita asked the group to comment further on who will be represented on the technology panel. In her conversations with the national experts, she has learned a number of things. Jim Rutherford has done a lot of this work, and we could ask him to try his hand at doing this (with Science and Technology as separate parts) or we could go to Cary Sneider at the Boston Museum of Science (who has a hand in the Massachusetts standards.) who ever we go with would have first crack at writing the standards for the content area panel to react to. Carrie might not be willing to do the science part whereas Jim would be able to.

Bette wondered if they could talk to each other about this? Money may be an issue.

John noted the person at the museum of science might have an approach that was more realistic and better rooted in where the United States is going in the next 20 years.

Anita will pursue conversations with both Cary Sneider and Jim Rutherford. The focus for the work will be to:

- define technology education and differentiate it from instructional technology used in classrooms
- define the process

- define the critical skills needed to make decisions about technology
- define the content and impact of technology

Anita presented a rough draft for the July and August Content area panel discussions. The group responded to the suggestions and brainstormed topics that need to be incorporated into the summer work of the panels or of the Advisory Committees.

We cannot lose track of the link between the content and the assessment that must inform the teaching of that content.

John suggested we must inform the content area panels to consider how the content will be assessed – we should ask them to think about this when they are creating these standards...

What kind of questions should be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee? We should ask them to what extent should the revised standards in the Maine *Learning Results* be assessable through different methods.

Dan suggested if we don't give these national experts some framework for assessments we will not get back a consistent form of standards:

It is possible that the National Center for Education and the Economy will serve as the general contractor for this work.

Ellie noted that we never settled the question if this is a minimum or maximum set of standards. Anita will bring back clarification for the group.

Anita suggested that we need to keep thinking about the issue of assessments and the re-writing of the standards.

Anita suggested that about 4 members of this group should attempt to attend the retreat in June with PAC and TAC. Members that are available are encouraged to e-mail Anita.

Anita redirected the discussion to the training for the content area panels.

Dan suggested the role of the national experts will take people by surprise and it is important not to shortchange that discussion.

The work to be done between July 22 and August 10th will include many documents that people will need to access and download.

They will need to take a look at the draft of the new MLR for their content areas will be done before the 10th of August.

They will have a chance to meet with the national experts so that members of the content area panels will have the chance to react to these documents. There will

then be a chance for the national experts to respond to a possibly re-work sections of the documents that were discussed by the group.

John suggested the July 22 day also frame the reason for re-writing the MLR – i.e. the realities of implementing the *Learning Results*.

Dan asked if there was an expectation for the Learning Results Review Advisory Committee to attend the meeting on July 22? Anita indicated this was not a requirement, but would be great if members were able to attend.

John wanted to address the review of the research that examines what kids need to know for life. We are making assumptions about this, but someone must have done more research on this topic – and it would be wise to share.

John wondered if it would be in our role to go through the verbiage of the current MLR to lean them out? Anita felt this was the role of the content area panels and the national experts.

Bette suggested we discuss literacy issues across content. What about the issue of people understanding lexiles and similar issues across the content areas.

Anita suggested it is the role of this advisory group to establish the conversations that should be held in each of the content areas – for this group to define the mountain range the groups are working in.

Brian suggested we needed to have some guidance for the content area panels as to how these would be assessed and through what assessment vehicles will be used.

Val indicated we need also to indicate how the assessment will work – will these be loosely aligned or will they be in stricter alignment? This should be a question for TAC.

Karoldene also suggested we look at the extent to which the standards should be “spiraled” though the levels and how can the work with the GLE’s inform our work.

She also suggested we explore the issue of “college ready” and what that means?

Dan wondered if we should have the national experts examine the GLE’s as well for this kind of alignment. The group agreed that this should be a second part of their work with the State. Val noted the MLR would have to align with the GLE’s. Anita suggested the order of the questions that are posed to the experts will be critical – the possibility that presenting the experts with the GLE’s up front may have unintended consequences for the standards because GLE’s must by definition be assessable in a large scale statewide test.

Bette suggested we needed to spend time thinking about how kids are involved with the assessment system and examine how students engage with the

assessment system. This could inform the system in ways that we have not addressed thus far in Maine.

Deborah suggested this assessment system be presented in such a way that teachers could grasp what they were supposed to do.

Nancy suggested that if the assessments do not allow the student to show all of the things that are part of the standards because they are given traditional assessments. She wondered if there could be a greater emphasis for districts to do performance assessments.

Final Comments about today's conversation.

Members suggested the conversation of the day really clarified the role of technology and engineering education in the documents and the need to provide greater clarity to the field about technology.

There are lingering concerns about the digestibility of the engineering question for the general public. We need to continue to think about what to call it, Science and ???

It is good that the group values technology instruction. We are moving along nicely, and the straightforwardness of the conversation is important.

There are lingering concerns that these remain essential and minimal standards. There needs to be clarity about this.

The group has been productive – we have started to move beyond the “this will never fly” point – and while the document may not be perfect it will continue to move our education system along the road of improvement and will help to serve the needs of Maine.

It is important to remember that we are doing something right in Maine, many of our young people are prepared and ready to contribute to the future.

The process of the group has been wonderful, and the facilitation and organization has been wonderful.

We are up and running. We have content area names in place, and we have moved forward as a group to a level of familiarity and candor that permits us to work more effectively and professionally.

The group agreed to reschedule the August meeting to August 24.

Becky Berger will take notes next meeting.

The meeting was ended at 3:00.